

**Grantown Grammar School  
The Highland Council  
27 November 2007**

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## 1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Grantown Grammar School in April 2004. Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report.

HM Inspectors revisited the school in February 2006 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report. The school and education authority had fully met one main point for action, but had made adequate or weak progress on the other four.

HM Inspectors made a further visit to the school in September 2007 to assess the extent to which the school and education authority had responded to these four remaining main points for action.

## 2. Continuous improvement

A new headteacher had taken up post in November 2006. She had effectively set a clear direction for the school. She had won the respect and confidence of staff, and successfully engaged them in working to improve the school's provision. New principal teachers in science and physical education, along with other new members of staff, were having a positive impact on the school.

The school had made improvements to pupils' attainment in reading and writing in S1 and S2. By the end of S2, most pupils were now attaining appropriate national levels in reading, with half of them exceeding these levels. The majority of pupils were attaining these levels in writing. Less than half of pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in mathematics by the end of S2.

Pupils' attainment at the end of S4 and at the end of S6 had shown an upturn in 2007, following a period of decline. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more awards at SCQF<sup>1</sup> level 5 by the end of S4 was above the national average in 2007. The proportions of pupils attaining three or more, and one or more, awards at SCQF level 6 or better by the end of S6 were also above national averages. The proportion attaining five or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better by the end of S6 was well above the national average. The three year underlying trend in attainment had decreased on almost all measures. The school's performance by the end of S6 was below or well below that of similar schools.

The school had made significant changes to its curriculum and timetable structure, which were improving the range of pupils' choices and their experiences. More teaching time had

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

been made available for very small Advanced Higher classes. The new S2 course *Making connections* was effectively improving pupils' skills in working together and using information and communications technology.

Pupils now benefited from a newly built sports centre which included a refurbished swimming pool, spacious games areas and a fitness suite. The school had significantly improved its stock of modern computer equipment. School staff and pupils had made use of improved stage lighting to enhance the school's performances.

The school continued to successfully promote pupils' wider achievement through a range of experiences, including participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, an art trip to Edinburgh and the school show. It had further developed its levels of pastoral care for pupils, and had achieved Health Promoting School status in April 2006.

### **3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The first follow-through report published in April 2006 identified four main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

#### **3.1 Ensure improvements in procedures for evaluating the quality of learning and teaching and attainment, and for planning for improvement, including taking account of pupils' views.**

The school and education authority had made adequate progress in meeting this main point for action.

School staff had recently put in place a comprehensive programme of classroom visits to monitor the quality of learning and teaching. These visits effectively supported principal teachers and the senior management team in discussing with teachers the strengths in their classroom practice. Staff could now more effectively identify where improvements needed to be made and were visiting each others' classrooms more often to share good practice. Across the school there were examples of very good practice in learning and teaching. The school's learning and teaching group was working effectively to support the sharing and promotion of best practice, and to gather this together in a school policy.

Senior managers continued to support staff in interpreting and analysing information about pupils' attainment in examinations. Managers now conducted much more rigorous discussions with principal teachers on attainment from S4 to S6. They recorded clear action points during these discussions, and identified strategies for improvement. Attainment levels at S1 and S2 were not discussed effectively.

The headteacher had significantly improved procedures for planning for improvement. The school had accurately evaluated its performance using a range of methods, including questionnaire responses from staff, parents and pupils. Senior managers had re-established the pupil council in order to give pupils an even stronger voice in the school. Managers had included all staff in discussion of the school's strengths and development needs as the school development plan was drawn up. The plan contained an appropriate set of projects to address the key weaknesses of the school. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, learning

and teaching had improved and arrangements for self-evaluation and planning were more robust. More remained to be done to ensure that these new approaches to self-evaluation and planning led to increases in attainment, and improvements in the quality of all pupils' learning.

### **3.2 Ensure improvement in the effectiveness of management through a revision of the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team, ensuring a focus on improving the school.**

The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting this main point for action.

The new headteacher had made a very effective start to leading the school. She had set out a clear strategic vision and had improved systems for communication with staff. Almost all staff had responded very well to her lead, and were actively supporting developments. The headteacher and the two deputy headteachers worked effectively as a team. The deputy headteachers now had a greater focus on quality assurance and school improvement, particularly relating to learning and teaching. The headteacher had ensured that the heads of departments were now much more focused on quality assurance and school improvement. Senior managers now involved almost all staff in working groups to take forward developments across the school. Senior managers had not yet ensured that this improvement in leadership capacity resulted in consistently improved outcomes for all pupils. As a result of the progress made, leadership for learning at all levels in the school had improved.

### **3.3 Ensure improvement in the provision for modern languages and religious and moral education in the curriculum.**

The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting this main point for action.

The school now had a permanent teacher of religious and moral education (RME) and this subject now appeared in the curriculum from S1 to S4. The school's plans to offer certificate courses in RME had been deferred, owing to the long term absence of the teacher. The school had improved the provision of modern languages. Pupils were able to study French and German in S1 before specialising in one of these languages from S2. This arrangement, along with developments in teaching approaches, was improving pupils' learning experiences and their progress. The school's improved curriculum structure ensured that all pupils were able to choose a modern language in S3/S4, and the proportion of pupils doing so had increased. The proportion of pupils studying modern languages in S5 was in line with national averages. Attainment in French in S4 to S6, and in German in S5 and S6, was very high. As a result of improvements made, provision in RME and modern languages was now better.

### **3.4 Ensure improvement in the identified health and safety issues.**

The school and education authority had made adequate progress in meeting this main point for action.

The school and education authority had taken further effective steps to improve aspects of the accommodation. These included refurbishing the computing areas to provide a very effective learning environment. The pupils' toilets had been significantly improved. Insufficient action had been taken to improve security arrangements in the school. No part of the school had a secure entry system. This posed a potential hazard to pupils while they were in the school buildings.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting two main points for action, and adequate progress in meeting two main points for action. With the continuing support of the education authority, and working with staff, the headteacher had the capacity to improve the school. Within one year of the publication of this report, HM Inspectors will ask for a report from the education authority on the progress that has been made in ensuring pupils' safety, and in improving learning, teaching and attainment. Parents and carers will be informed of the progress that has been made.

Brian Stewart  
HM Inspector

27 November 2007

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk). A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: [ask@spsa.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsa.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsa.org.uk](http://www.spsa.org.uk).

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